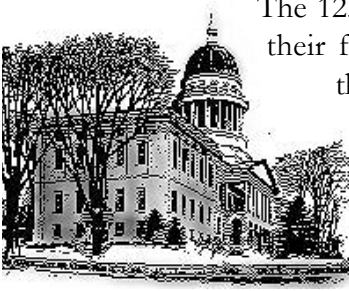




Recycle This! Newsletter

Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management & Recycling Program * March 2007


Legislative Update



The 123rd Maine Legislature is into their first session by a little more than a month and already has almost 1500 bills printed. Of these, about 30 have been identified as capturing our interest. There is a revived interest related to the bottle returns, deposits,

and the redemption process as well as an exciting show for recycling and waste management issues. We may truly be optimistic about going around again or RECYCLING.

While the Bottle Bill belongs to the Maine Department of Agriculture, to a lot of individuals getting their nickel back defines the recycling process. The Legislature will look at unclaimed deposits as well as reusable bottles and plastic containers. The reuse interest would prompt a study group to be formed. As far as the deposit itself goes, some would like to see it go to ten cents and be printed or labeled more clearly. Going hand-in-hand with this attention, L.D. 295 revisits fines for littering. We will just have to see where all this goes.



There are a number of bills that focus on waste management issues, including: last year's SPO Task Force recommendations for statutory changes (LD 1313); a revisiting of host communities and their benefits (LD 1431); as well as a discussion on municipal and commercial landfill definitions (LD 935); and a review of solid waste programs provided by the State (LD 810). Other bills included: LD 1191; LD 1196; LD 1204; and LD 1596. Public hearings on these eight bills were heard on Friday, April 13th. For more information on these and other bills, please visit the Legislature's web page. The bond package that was approved by the Legislature did include \$300,000 to assist closed municipal landfills with remediation actions.

State Waste Management

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Recycling Plan : A work in Progress

Under MRSA Title 38, Chapter 24, Subchapter 2: § 2122., the State Planning Office is directed to:

prepare an analysis of, and a plan for, the management, reduction and recycling of solid waste for the State. The plan must be based on the established priorities and recycling goals. The plan must provide guidance and direction to municipalities in planning and implementing waste management and recycling programs at the state, regional and local levels. The plan is to be updated every 5 years and cover four points:

- **Waste characterization.** The state plan must be based on a comprehensive analysis of solid waste generated, recycled and disposed of in the State.
- **Waste reduction and recycling assessment.** The state plan must include an assessment of the extent to which waste generation could be reduced at the source and the extent to which recycling can be increased.
- **Determination of existing and potential disposal capacity.** The state plan must identify existing solid waste disposal and management capacity within the State and the potential for expansion of that capacity.
- **Projected demand for capacity.** The state plan must identify the need in the State for current and future solid waste disposal capacity by type of solid waste, including identification of need over the next 5-year, 10-year and 20-year periods.

The plan is currently being updated by staff. Comments and suggestions from the public and during the recent Legislative Blue Ribbon Committee are being included in this process. The intent is to have a draft of the plan ready by early summer.

Blaine House Reception 2007

This year had the possibility of being an extra special Maine Recycles Week. In the last two years, the young poster winners first shared the spotlight with the “Box Lady” and then with the educational reuse centers. This year it was thought that a new recycling campaign would be announced or else promoted. Well, what more could be as special? To the assembled guests, there was no new campaign announced - and to everyone there, including the SPO staff, the afternoon was really special.

For the fourth consecutive year, the State’s First Lady, Mrs. Karen Baldacci, graciously welcomed students and families to the Blaine House. In all, approximately fifty guests and two dogs gathered in the parlor to witness the students’ receiving their certificates for their posters. The eight students represented St. George(4), and one each for Readfield, South Bristol, Tenants Harbor, and Yarmouth. Students from Bangor were unable to make the reception but were recognized before the Bangor City Council earlier in the week.

Following the awards and pictures with Mrs. Baldacci, the Blaine House staff served tea for those attending. As the social hour broke down, the families gravitated to the Maine State Museum.

Calendars are available and can be ordered on the State Planning Office web site for the Waste management and Recycling Program - www.recyclemaine.com.



New Machinery on the Landscape

With all the talk of single sort recycling and changes in existing processes, there is still excitement in many operations about new equipment. Even with focus on “doing more with less” at a recent MRRA Workshop in Orono, a mention of a new grinder in Boothbay Harbor prompted several distracted discussions. The recycling rate may remain in the mid 30 percents, but the activity around the State is far from negative or even on par.

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Earth Day – 2007



With a year like we are having so far, we wonder when spring will ever come. Most of us were raised with such phrases as: “March comes in like a lamb and goes out like a lion”. April is the time of hope and new life, and perhaps the reason for Earth Day. April 22nd of each year is Earth

Day. This will mark the 37th year of the observance of Earth Day. Credit is given to former United States Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin) for the first Earth Day in this country.

Earth Day has become an annual national event to learn about ecology and what we can do to reduce environmental harm. Most of those working with Recycling think of the fall now as the time for promoting waste reduction - Maine Recycles Week; however as we turn to promoting and emphasis on marketing our services, we also must recognize that we can’t miss an opportunity to remind or convince members of the public to recycle. Our message is that we should all be working toward sustainability and changing our habits for the good of the Earth - and All.

Leaning Toward the Green

There are a handful of individuals from Maine's colleges and universities, the Maine DEP, the SPO, and the Chewonki Foundation that share a philosophy for the concern for the environment and recognize a need for change, and have formed the Maine Green Campus Consortium. The State too has reacted to closer scrutiny by the Environmental Protection Agency and formed its Green Committee to create an action plan for state agencies. Actually, these activities were common around the world as symposiums on Global Warming and green house gases appeared more frequently in the news and scientific journals. **Green** is the thing with which we now brand the activity of those who embrace the environment with a pro-active philosophy toward living in the now with a responsibility for helping with the future.

The March 19, 2007, *Waste News* featured articles that presented 25 examples from business and government to be green. It strikes us that this is not only a feature but a great opportunity for each of us to personalize a list of priorities for not only celebrating Earth Day in April but to approach April 22nd, 2007, with a commitment to the future. *Waste News* correspondent Elizabeth McGowen focused on the following 25 items: solar panels, green servers, junk mail, paper recycling, green roofs, landfill gas, refurbished CPUs, refurbished printer cartridges, compact florescent bulbs, energy credits, food waste, recycling fats and oils, foundry sand, barcodes & hazardous waste, waste audit, hybrid vehicles, packaging reuse, water reuse, motion sensors, deep water cooling, paperless billing, online swap shop, bag reuse, vehicle idling, and smart meters. As you look at a national paper, the tendency is to say something like: "Oh, that is nice but not for me." That is why we extend that challenge to make your own list or recognize that the here and now includes all of us - consider 25 green steps in a personal or business plan that is realistic for each of us.

Green Committee - Let's begin by getting together as a family or forming a green committee at the place of business. It is no different than having a recycling committee and the realization that great things happen when we work together and cheer each other on with planning our activities, toward implementing our strategies and evaluating our efforts.



Purchase or Invest in Renewable Energy Credit -

At first it may be applicable only to big business or celebrities; however let's put a spin on the concept. If we put the suggestion in perspective, we realize that we do have the choice of their energy mix (more information can be found on the web sites for the Maine PUC or the Public Advocate's Office). One of our most valuable assets in this hustle and bustle world is our time.

Waste Audits - Think about it. Isn't the waste audit where all or most of our successful recycling programs start? If we would like to improve our recycling efforts in the home or business, we can launch the campaign with a waste audit. By leaving the waste audit on an annual list, it stresses the need to evaluate our situation on a regular basis. Energy audits and waste audits can help us to navigate the choppy waters of our budgets.



By investing time in our recycling committees, civic organizations, and other decision-making or public entities, we can make an impact or at least let our voices be heard.

Recycling Fats & Oils - There is a push for hybrids and then there is a great interest in biofuels in Maine. First introduced in mixtures of heating oils, biofuels have now found their way into energizing fleets of vehicles, including the bus fleets at the University of Southern Maine and Acadia National Park. A few individuals have converted their private vehicles for using screened or processed cooking oils.

Institute Paperless Billing - Is presented for Industry - any Industry; however just the suggestion affords us the opportunity to once more make a pitch for having the "Recycle This Newsletter!" be requested by e-mail. The customer may be always right but with recycling the time has come to re-educate.

Junk Mail - The Waste News article told the story of a county office that had set a goal on cutting back on junk mail by assigning three employees to returning mail or contacting the company to ask to be removed from their mail lists. This is commendable and even great for individuals and families. The www.recyclemaine.com web site also has a few addresses for contacts to remove your name and the junk mail as well.

Toward the Green

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Reuse of Industrial Bi-products - There may be several examples applicable to Maine; however this is another opportunity to ask school departments to pledge to support the state's reusable resource centers, such as: Ruth's Reusable Resource Center in Scarborough, the SHARECenter in Auburn and Topsham, and Everybody's Depot in its new home on the University of Maine Farmington campus. One change at these facilities is the "green zone", which makes some materials available for purchase by members of the general public. Maine Building Materials Exchange in Sanford, Gray, and now in a new home in Lisbon offers building materials to income-qualified individuals or on a pricing scale to the public. On the larger scale is the Industrial Materials Exchange, which tries to match needs with supplies of surplus and saved materials. The latter operation that is run by a veteran recycler is perhaps better known in connection with *The Island Rover*, www.islandrover.com.

Reduce Product Packaging - On the consumer side, we have been singing about selective purchasing or smart shopping where the consumer helps to reduce the waste stream when shopping. The other way of looking at it would be from the manufacturer's perspective. Once more the final decision lies with the consumer.

Bag Reuse - Just recently San Francisco banned the use of plastic bags, so they can now ask customers to pay for paper or bring their own. Actually in Maine, especially the large grocery chains have shown a recent interest in encouraging the use of "cloth" or reusable bags. An observation can be made now for the price coming down unless style is preferred. Holding its own is the traditional L.L. Bean canvas bag.



Online Swap Shop - Most Maine communities are proud of their swap shop at their local transfer station, as can be witnessed by "The Pick of Litter Fashion Show", which has almost become a tradition in Camden. The twist here is the "online" aspect. The City of Saco does have something in place on their web site. This is more like a bulletin board data base. There is however Freecycle. The web site, www.freecycle.org may actually originate in Topsham, but it could easily be located anywhere. Searches in cyberspace match the unwanted from the unwantee with the wanter.

Remanufactured Inkjet & Toner Cartridges - We could easily identify with the inkjet cartridges items for packaging and recycling on our own fronts - mostly on programs collecting spent cartridges. Printer cartridges have been high on the recyclable list for reuse for some time. Many schools in Maine have taken advantage of recycling programs for funding of classroom activities, as well as of clubs and extra curricular programs. The actual use or purchase of remanufactured cartridges adds a new dimension that should be considered. This is also a case of placing our trust in improved products. A decade ago remanufactured toner cartridges had a stigma attached with the label of less quality and not lasting as long. The second life cartridges can still save money and need to have the bad wraps removed.

Food Waste Reduction - For the last few years, we even referred to composting as not just composting but food waste composting. The Sandy River Recycling Association has adopted a model food waste composting program for its area. The Department of Agriculture, DEP, as well as the SPO, have promoted composting of food waste, yard waste, and even specialized waste streams such as marine products and seafood. The sale of compost bins by MRRA adds hundreds of practitioners each year to our communities. Schools report from time to time that their students love the worm composting in the classroom. It is obvious then that Mainers have easily embraced various levels of composting and easy to place the concentrated effort on our list.

These are but a dozen or so examples to put a twist on Elizabeth McGowan's *Waste News* article of 25 green items. "Recycle This Newsletter!" would like to make the point of the fact that there are opportunities available to each of us. What is needed is really our commitment to do better - whether in waste reduction, energy consumption, preventing toxic emissions, or whatever - we must do better.

New Machinery

(Continued from page 2)



In Boothbay Harbor, which has always been noted for its processing of wood waste and grinding, \$700,000 has been invested in the new grinder. The new machine has a 60 inch 25,000 pound roller that is capable of easily handling full-length logs. It replaces an old friend that labored for years but now owes the facility nothing - perhaps is why Steve Lewis is so excited.

Another exciting project is the retrofitting of *ecomaine's* facilities in Portland. This spring, we will see the new line set up and new equipment for what is hoped to be one of the most efficient operations imaginable. Taking into account the number of sorting points, we will be witness to several pieces of customized equipment operating in the shadow of one of the first waste-to-energy plants in the Maine. The design will also make use of old equipment. In only a few months time, the major retrofit and renovations will most likely have everyone accepting the transition of RWS to *ecomaine*.

Just a few exits down the Pike at the Portland Nexcycle plant is one of the largest baler's in the state. The new piece of equipment allows Nexcycle to maintain its high efficient, albeit low profile, operation. Considering the area served and volume of materials processed, Nexcycle has established itself in Maine as playing an important role in the strategy of the beverage container redemption policy and making it work.

Throughout Maine, we are seeing the processing arm of the waste reduction efforts working because of some very impressive pieces of equipment. Remember though that machinery works only because of the skill and ability of the committed employees and managers of our Industry and municipal leaders.

MRRA Takes to the Slopes



Olympic Competition - not; X-Treme snowboarding - not; Professional pair skating - not; and a fair amount of apres ski festivities - Well, Maybe!

The ski season may have ended by April 30th; however the date should be marked for the beginning of MRRA's two day conference at the Sugarloaf Ski Resort. This will be the 14th Annual event for the association. It appears that every other year the MRRA gathering moves from the Samoset Resort in Rockport, and this year the organization has chosen to visit Western Maine. Much of Maine is rural, and this is one more opportunity to celebrate the significant success and huge efforts of our small towns.

Larger communities will still be represented. It is anticipated that a good deal of conversation will be centered on single sort recycling. With the *ecomaine* lead, the conference comes at just about the time that the Portland facility will be coming up and running.

It is anticipated that Kate Krebs, Exec. Director of the National Recycling Council will be one key speaker and will address the group on the NRC's new promotional activities. This will support what Maine is doing with the image of recycling.

To take advantage of the setting, there will be opportunities for attendees to stretch their legs with tours of local facilities and the and the nearby Boralex plant. The Sugarloaf facility itself serves as a fine example for recycling.

The MRRA conference is for everyone interested and concerned for recycling and municipal waste matters. Waste does matter and there is ample opportunity to exchange ideas and voice opinions. Your SPO Waste Management and Recycling Team hope to see you there.

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Please contact Rhonda Cartlidge at rhonda.cartlidge@maine.gov or 1-800-662-4545 to request changes.

Coming Soon

Earth Day is April 22!

Don't miss this once-a-year opportunity to promote recycling in your community.

The **Maine Resource Recovery Association** will hold its **Annual Solid Waste Conference & Recyclathon** on **April 30 & May 1**

at **Sugarloaf USA** in **Carrabasset Valley**. Call the Maine Resource Recovery Association at 942-6772 for more information or check the MRRA web site.

ecomaine is expected to put the single sort processing facility into operation in early May.

